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ART)2U_ Yk.

Creative juices

JUDITH MASON (Gallery on the Market);
ROBERT SLINGSBY . (Goodman);

{ ANI (140 Bree Str

A vi SCHONFELDT (Market Gallery);
NINA ROMM (Natalie Knight Gallery).

This can hardly be called a major Mason exhibition, but even minor Mason is better than major almost anybody else. It consists mainly of drawings for her book A Dante Bestiary, to be published in New York in February. There is also a series of drawings and oils, Desecrated Shrine, on a vandalised 18th Century shrine near Figline Valdarno, while An Elegy for a Dead Mountaineer followed a trip to the Himalayas.

Her technique is as assured as ever and a sojourn in Italy seems, if anything, to have refreshed her creative juices.

I have heard Hlungwaniâ\200\231s exhibition referred to as the most important sculpture exhibition ever held in SA. That may be hyperbole, but it is certainly one of the most remarkable. Most of Hlungwaniâ\200\231s considerable oeuvre originates from his vision of the New Jerusalem, built on an acropolis site overlooking the Gazankulu village of Mbhokota, where he lives.

It combines Christian and African themes and mythologies. The volume of work is all the more impressive in that it has all been executed since 1980 by an artist who's com-

Mason ... assured

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pletely self-taught. While it is thus i inspirational rather than technical, it is amazingly sophisticated. The show shouldnâ\200\231t be missed.

A somewhat different African tradition

infuses Slingsby's latest work. Trance-
Images of the Richtersveld, inspired by the
petroglyphs of Helskloof, is the culmination
of two years' painting and a lifetime's inter-
est in archaeology. He recreates the mosaic-
like luminous dots that are the basis of these
rock paintings with great skill.

I must admit that I related
more readily to his bronze
sculptures. These neo-cubist
faces and mythical figures
like Rhino, with a huge horn,
or the man on a bull in Qohi
Qohi have a vigour and
humour I do not feel so strong-
ly in his other work.

It is not entirely chance that
the rhinoceros appears in so
many current shows, as many
artists are contributing to a
charity auction to finance
wildlife conservation. Few
have gone so far as Romm,
whose latest show is almost
entirely devoted to rhinos
or, rather, to rhinos and wom-
en. If that raises the odd eye-
brow, it's hardly surprising.
There's one picture of a nude
girl riding a rhino and caress-
ing its huge horn in which the

rhino's expression leaves no doubt what he, |:-

at least, thinks of it all. But if the subject
matter is new, the style is in Romm's individ-
ual, eccentric, but well-established manner.

I must admit that Schönfeldt is an artist
whose reputation puzzles me. His latest work
Stresses the distinction between curios
mementos designed to keep the memory of

an original alive and authentic works of -
and authentic works of -

art and harks back to times spent in Wind-
strikes me as slight. Michael Coulson

hoek and Venice, as well as Johannesburg. It

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2003

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